DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 261 202 CE 042 369

AUTHOR Sansregret, Marthe
TITLE Recognition of Prior Learning. Administrator's Guide.
INSTITUTION John Abbott Coll., Sainte Anne de Bellevue (Quebec).
SPONS AGENCY Quebec Dept. of Education, Quebec.
REPORT NO ISBN-2-551-06553-4
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 80p.; For related documents, see CE 042 368-370. English translation funded by the Federation des Cegeps du Quebec and the Quebec Ministere de l'Enseignement Superieur, de la Science et de la Technologie.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Adult Students; *College Credits; *Experiential Learning; Goal Orientation; *Portfolios (Background Materials); Postsecondary Education; *Prior Learning; *Program Implementation; Work Experience

ABSTRACT

This guide is designed for administrators of universities, colleges, school boards, and private institutions who wish to consider the implementation of a program for the recognition of prior learning within their institutions. To explain the possibility of transferring learning skills, some examples of the recognition of prior learning are presented in chapter I. Chapter II provides an overview of the various steps that preceded the writing of this guide and gives the sources of the information. Chapter III presents a brief history of the recognition of prior learning. Chapter IV deals with the rationale for the recognition of prior learning in academic institutions. Chapter V facilitates the understanding of the vocabulary that is used for the recognition of experiential learning. A few definitions and propositions are presented. The ways of recognizing learning acquired in a nontraditional way are explained in chapter VI. Chapter VII covers quality control. Chapter VIII gives an overview of the main parties involved in the program for the recognition of prior learning, and chapter IX proposes to administrators an operational model in 12 steps and identifies the various groups of participants. Resources are listed. Four pages of references are included. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ED261202

Recognition of Prior Learning

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Administrator's Guide

Marthe Sansregret

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
M. Sansregret
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CE042369

Published by John Abbott College
in cooperation with the
Ministere de l'Enseignement Superieur,
de la Science et de la Technologie du Quebec

The original French version of this guide was produced with the support of a grant from the Direction Générale de l'Éducation des Adultes (Service de recherche et développement et Direction de la formation professionnelle) of the Quebec Ministry of Education. This English translation was funded by the Fédération des Cégeps du Québec and by the Direction générale de l'enseignement et de la recherche universitaires du Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Science et de la Technologie.

Printed by the Printing Department, John Abbott College
Distributed by Project Office, R & D
John Abbott College
P.O. Box 2000
Ste Anne de Bellevue (Montreal)
Québec H9X 3L9
Information : (514) 457-6610, local 286

This document was adapted and translated by Marthe Sansregret from the original French document. Revision of the English translation was done by James W. Hamilton.

© Copyright, Marthe Sansregret, Ottawa (Canada), 1985
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, translated or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the author.

Legal deposit: third semester, 1985.
Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec
National Library of Canada
ISBN 2-551-06553-4

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE

Marthe Sansregret
Andragogist

John Abbott College
P.O. Box 2000
Ste Anne de Bellevue, Québec
Canada H9X 3L9

ED42369

FROM THE SAME AUTHOR

La reconnaissance des acquis expérientiels des femmes aux États-Unis, 1983.

RECONNAISSANCE DES ACQUIS EXPÉRIENTIELS :
Le Portfolio - Guide de l'étudiant, 1984

RECONNAISSANCE DES ACQUIS EXPÉRIENTIELS :
Le Portfolio - Guide du conseiller andragogique, 1984

RECONNAISSANCE DES ACQUIS EXPÉRIENTIELS :
Guide de l'administrateur, 1984

RECONNAISSANCE DES ACQUIS EXPÉRIENTIELS :
Cours sur le Portfolio pour les collèges et les universités, 1985

RECONNAISSANCE DES ACQUIS EXPÉRIENTIELS :
Le Portfolio - Guide de l'évaluateur (to be published)

The Recognition of Women's Experiential Learning in the United States, 1983 (ERIC Clearinghouse, ED 244 050).

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING :
The Portfolio - Student's Guide, 1985

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING :
The Portfolio - Andragogical Counselor's Guide, 1985

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING :
Course on Portfolio Development for Colleges and Universities, 1985

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING :
The Portfolio - Assessor's Guide (to be published)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the Direction Générale de l'Éducation des Adultes (Service de recherche et de développement, et Direction de la formation professionnelle) and especially André Beaudet who awarded the research grant for the development of the original version of this document. We also wish to thank the Fédération des Cégeps du Québec and the Direction générale de l'enseignement et de la recherche universitaires of the Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Science et de la Technologie who provided the funds for the adaptation and translation into English of this document. Administration of the project monies was graciously done by John Abbott College.

We wish to express our gratitude to Professor Gabrielle Cantin from the Department of Andragogy of the University of Montreal who has kindly accepted to be our consultant. We thank Mrs. Hélène Laporte-Rawji for her assistance, and also for her help in processing this document.

Consulting time provided by the following people was gratefully accepted and is hereby acknowledged:

Ruth B. Ekstrom, Senior Research Scientist, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, N.J.;
Kate Gulliver, Coordinator of Student Services, Regents External Degree Program, University of the State of New York, N.Y., Albany, N.Y.;
Paul Jacobs, Director of Testing, Thomas Edison College, Trenton, N.J.;
Morris T. Keeton, President, Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning, Columbia, Maryland;
Albert Serling, Assistant Vice-President, Academic Services, Empire State College, State University of New York, N.Y.;
Urban Whitaker, Manager, The Learning Center, San Francisco, Ca.

Marthe Sansregret

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements		v
INTRODUCTION		1
Chapter I	- Examples of recognition of prior learning	7
Chapter II	- Sources	11
Chapter III	- Historical overview	15
Chapter IV	- The rationale that supports the recognition of experiential learning in academic institutions	27
Chapter V	- Definitions and propositions	31
Chapter VI	- Ways of recognizing experiential learning	35
Chapter VII	- Quality Control	39
Chapter VIII	- Main parties involved in the program for the recognition of experiential learning	45
Chapter IX	- Operational model	49
CONCLUSION		69
REFERENCES		71
Appendix		75

... credentials are power. Those who set the rules of the credentialing game are establishing the routes of access to that power.

Morris T. Keeton
President, CAEL

INTRODUCTION

The research grant for this work was awarded by the adult education branch of the Ministry of Education of Quebec, specifically, the Service de Recherche et Développement, and the Direction de la Formation professionnelle. The first condition for the awarding of the grant was that the author prepare a portfolio which could be used by adult students who wish to obtain an evaluation of knowledge which they have acquired outside the traditional academic setting. Once completed, the evaluation will enable them to receive official recognition for their prior learning when and if they return to school to complete a program of studies.

The mandate also included the preparation of a guide for the andragogical counselor which was to provide the counselor with enough information to help students develop a portfolio. Later on, the mandate was extended to a third volume, i.e., a guide for administrators. We suggest that the users of this administrator's guide read the following work: The Portfolio - Andragogical Counselor's Guide, and The Portfolio, Student's Guide.

The Portfolio model was developed to help adults who want to go to college, but it can also be of use to those who are ready to attend university.

Why have we chosen college-level education as the subject of our study, rather than the secondary level or the university level? There are three main reasons, and these are as follows:

1) In Québec, college-level education is a separate and distinct level which lies between the secondary level and the university level. The colleges offer two types of programs (a two-year general education program leading to university, undergraduate level, and a three-year vocational education which prepares the student for the job market). In both cases, tuition is free. Adults who wish to obtain recognition for prior learning in order to retrain, to obtain a promotion or to make a career change usually don't know where to begin. The College is a good starting point because much of the "life experience" or "on the job experience" of returning students corresponds to college-level learning. Tuition is free, and completion of a college diploma can lead to entry into university.

2) Our work at John Abbott College includes the implementation of a day program in general education (Adult Learner's Program) and a Job Entry Program for Adults, also offered during the day.

3) In addition to this clientele, a good number of adults take courses with the younger population during the day, and others take credit or non credit courses in the evening.

John Abbott College has a research and development committee which advises the administration on the acceptability of research and development projects proposed by employees of the college. The research and development committee reports to the Research and Development Department of the college and is composed of administrators, faculty and non-teaching professionals. All requests for grant money, from within or from outside the college, are submitted to this committee. The committee members are chosen on the basis of their professionalism and their interest in research and development work. Approval by the research and development committee is an important step in the obtaining of a research grant. Our submission to this committee was received with interest, understanding and approval and this is much appreciated.

From the beginning of this project, we have been preoccupied with the question of how the three documents could serve the interests of adult students while following the policies and procedures of the institution involved. The implementation of a program for the recognition of prior learning involves administrators, counselors and students, and later on faculty members who are the evaluators. We are pleased to announce that the Direction générale de l'enseignement et de la recherche universitaires has awarded us a grant for a fourth document that will be addressed to evaluators.

The preparation of this guide has been done mainly for administrators of universities, colleges, school boards and private ins-

titutions who wish to consider the implementation of a program for the recognition of prior learning within their institutions.

The administrators may feel a need to consult among themselves. This is why we have decided to present a document in which they can find an overview of what it means to implement such a program; one which facilitates meetings between institutions and between different levels of education and one which enables them to agree on some basic rules.

The reader may question the fact that we rely on American research, when we could create our own system. To this question, we reply that it is impossible to implement a system for the recognition of prior learning without relying on sound research, published for a good number of years by well-known authors, whose competence and creditability are unquestioned. In addition, we rely on validated experience from well known institutions (New York Empire State College, Ohio University, Thomas A. Edison State College, Regent's External Degree Program, Vermont State College, The Learning Center of San Francisco) which also have a close link with the main network (Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning) of coordination and consultation for research in that field.

Robert Isabelle (1984) says that: "the particularity of CAEL consists in its avant-garde work and its leadership relevant to a

global and individualized process for the recognition of prior learning." It is important to note here that the American institutions which do sound work in recognition of prior learning belong to CAEL. Its mission is quoted by Isabelle:

- to promote the use of instruments designed for the measurement of prior learning and answering the strict requirements of validity, reliability and objectivity;
- to stimulate research relevant to prior learning and its recognition;
- to spread knowledge concerning the value and the process of experiential learning and its recognition.

Following exchanges with these specialists and having experienced a deep concern for the development of the process for Quebec, we have decided to present the chapters in the order described below.

In order to explain the possibility of transferring learning skills, some examples of the recognition of prior learning are presented in Chapter I. In Chapter II, the sources of our information are given in order that administrators can have a better idea of the various steps that preceded the writing of the documents.

The history of the recognition of prior learning goes back to 1945, i.e. the end of Second World War. From that time, the evaluation of prior learning has grown so rapidly that we have decided to include a brief history of it in Chapter III.

A rationale for the recognition of prior learning is presented in Chapter IV.

Meetings with different groups and individuals show that there is some confusion about certain definitions and about the meaning of recognition of prior learning. Chapter V attempts to clarify these items and introduces some "generally accepted propositions" (Cantin, 1984). The ways of recognizing learning acquired in a non traditional way are explained in Chapter VI.

Quality control is a prime necessity. It is covered in Chapter VII. Chapter VIII gives an idea of the people who play an important part in such a program and Chapter IX proposes to administrators an operational model in twelve steps and identifies the various groups of participants.

CHAPTER I

EXAMPLES OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

On November 5th, 1984, Marc Garneau from Quebec City became the first Canadian astronaut to take part in an American space mission. Along with six other astronauts, he was launched into space at Cape Canaveral in the Challenger. "Former officer in the Navy, specialist of the electronic war, Marc Garneau holds a doctorate degree in electronics engineering." (La Presse, le 5 novembre 1984).

The case of Marc Garneau is an example of transferable skills. As reported in the media, the academic background of Garneau did not seem to prepare him for space trips. Nevertheless, he was chosen for other skills which he has acquired, such as a tolerance for being isolated for a certain time, and in a restricted space (he crossed the Atlantic Ocean, sharing his boat with twelve other sailors, thus demonstrating useable skills)*. One might think that astronauts should first hold a commercial pilot's license. Garneau said he was only starting to learn to fly in order to eventually get his license.

* La Presse, March 1985

There is no doubt that, when it came to selecting the candidates who would become astronauts, NASA studied the backgrounds and the personalities of those candidates. It is evident, however, that degrees (which are the proof of a certain competence in a specific area) are not sufficient. Once the competence of a candidate has been identified, NASA will teach the person whatever is needed in order to meet its objectives.

Taking Marc Garneau as an example, we know that many adults have acquired a variety of skills that can be tranferred to other situations. The recognition of prior learning is an attempt to make this a reality.

Another example is the father of Apple computers, Steve Wozniak, who, six or seven years ago, had, in an ordinary garage, begun to built a computer for his own use. This was the beginning of the Apple company. After his success, Wozniak returned to university to complete a bachelor's degree in engineering (La Presse, 26 avril 1984) (CBC T.V., Tuesday, Dec. 4, 1984).

The administrators of academic institutions are facing a new challenge: to implement an educational system that allows adults to receive official recognition for skills which they have acquired. The credits that they receive will count towards a diploma. They may or may not have to complete some formal courses in order to complete the diploma.

This diploma will allow the recipient adult to undertake a new career, to retrain, to ask for a promotion or to register in specialized or general program of education.

If we are serious about the need to recognize prior learning, it is important to first accept the fact that adults, as they become older, are more and more able to learn and that opportunities for learning should not be reserved only for younger people. Adults learn, from a variety of situations, a large number of experiences that may make them competent in several fields of interest. The capacity for learning has no age nor sex.

When NASA screened the candidates for their space mission, they selected mature adults who were competent and versatile. These candidates happened to be in their thirties and forties. They are Kathryn Sullivan, 32, Sally Ride, 33, David Leetsman, 35, Paul Scully-Power, 40, Robert Creppin, 47 (La Presse, November 5, 1984; Joseph Allen 47, (The Gazette, November 13, 1984).

The following chapter gives an overview of the various steps that preceded the writing of this guide.

CHAPTER II

SOURCES

More and more adults, wherever they live, are obtaining recognition for what they have learned outside the academic milieu (equivalences or exemptions). Nevertheless, up to this point in time, the United States remains the only country where it is possible to receive credit in the form of official recognition for previous learning.

If we wish to inquire about the recognition of prior learning, we must refer to American research and experimentation because the United States is, so far, the only country to recognize learning acquired outside of academic institutions.

Our research on the subject of experiential learning began with a mission to Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey (1982). This earlier work culminated in the publication by this author of a paper entitled The Recognition of Women's Experiential Learning in the United States (ERIC Clearinghouse for Adult, Career and Vocational Education, # ED 244 050). This work was published in English and in French by John Abbott College and the Quebec Ministry of Education. This

mission led to fruitful meetings with American experts in the field. These experts supplied us with reference books that allowed us to review the works published so far, especially in the field of learning acquired by women in homemaking and volunteer work.

Later on, a research mission sponsored by the Ministry of Inter-governmental Affairs (Quebec) enabled us to go to France from May 28 to June 12 1983. Although people in France are very concerned about the recognition of adults' prior learning, there is no actual means of recognizing learning, i.e. there is no systematic recognition of learning acquired outside the traditional academic schools, in relation to programs of college and university level.

Researchers from other countries around the world were questioned about this matter at the Second International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women. It became evident that no other country recognizes this non traditional learning in a scientific manner. These discussions took place with people from Holland, Sweden, Finland, South Africa, India, Austria, and other countries.

Once again, it became evident that the United States is the only country which has practical policies and procedures for the recognition of prior learning. A research seminar conducted by experts from CAEL (Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning) presented an opportunity to work with key persons who have expertise in this

field of research in the United States and to verify the relevance of the steps undertaken by the academic institutions in Quebec. Inspired by the American experience, approaches and methods, the author desires, through this document, to create a practical means of recognizing prior learning which can be used by academic institutions in Quebec, especially colleges and universities.

We have met with several groups of people and have noticed that there is a certain amount of ambiguity about this topic. Many individuals and representatives of academic institutions and community groups, wonder about the beginning of the recognition of experiential learning; who were the first people to request recognition, what are the benefits of this recognition, and what are the existing implementation systems?

In order to inform administrators and to provide them with information about this field and the possibility of implementing such a program in their own institutions, the next Chapter will present a brief history of the recognition of prior learning.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Learning by doing, an old concept

When we talk about experiential learning, we refer to a concept as old as the world, because individuals have always learned by trial and error, i.e. from tentative experiments conducted for the purpose of reaching a specific goal. What is often called learning by doing has been integrated from 1830 (Keeton and Tate, 1978) into courses offered in universities in the United States when Yale decided that students would work in laboratories. From then on, it was clear that a continuous exposure to practice would allow the student to apply the learning acquired from theory.

Around 1870, Johns Hopkins University gave permission to medical students to obtain practical training when visiting patients in hospitals. Later on, through the teaching of arts such as painting and sculpture, it was demonstrated that practice allied to theory facilitates learning and further achievements.

As a departure from that experiential learning which has always existed, a certain category of people (i.e. young students who are able to study full time), are separated from the general population in order to learn, mostly through theory. It is only since 1830 that students have come back to experiential learning. Since that time, experiential learning has been considered to be valid. However, until recently this principle has been accepted only for supervised experiential learning which took place within an academic institution and only for young students.

Recognition of prior learning for military personnel

It is only since the end of World War II that adults who had learned from a diversity of non supervised experiences could hope to obtain recognition for that prior learning. Upon their return from the war, former military personnel requested that their learning be recognized officially so that they could go back to school or apply for a job.

Adults who were part of the Armed Forces had previously received formal training and their learning was often equivalent to college level courses but had never received recognition from an academic institution.

This urgent request from ex-soldiers for the recognition of experiential learning led to a gathering of representatives from academic institutions and the labor market, the first time that this had happened. Business and industry, colleges and universities as well as

State and Community services got together in order to develop ways to recognize what these soldiers already knew and could do.

Ekstrom (1981) defines two types of experiential learning:

- the sponsored experiential learning, acquired in training sessions, internships, outside of classroom but planned and supervised by a vocational educator, and
- the prior learning acquired outside a classroom and not supervised by vocational educators.

When we talk about the recognition of experiential learning, we talk about this second type of experiential learning (prior learning).

The recognition of experiential learning for adults in general

The rationale that made possible a development of methods for the recognition of experiential learning acquired in the Armed Forces applies to the adult population in general. More and more adults go back to school in order to fulfill new educational objectives. Tough (1977) and Penland (1977) recall, in a research report, that about 80% of all adults engage in self-directed learning or non formal learning projects throughout life. These new ways of learning without supervision and in a variety of places also contribute to the development of the individual. Adults are more and more conscious that, in order to adapt to numerous social changes, education becomes part of their life project. The

increase in the number of adult admissions in colleges and universities attests to the growing popularity of the recognition of experiential learning (Stanley, 1980).

The recognition of prior learning supported by important research foundations

The merits of the recognition of adults' experiential learning are now being recognized. Important sources of funding are supporting research in this domain.

This growing demand for the recognition of prior learning justified the opening of CAEL, The Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning. "CAEL is [...] a small association of colleges and universities - currently about 292 - and a group of professionals in higher education - somewhat over 200 additional persons - who work together for the advancement of the use of experiential learning in college and university education and for its reliable and valid assessment." (Morris T. Keeton, 1985). The center, located in Columbia, Maryland, is the result of a research project done by Educational Testing Service (ETS), Princeton, N.J. The financing of CAEL was first guaranteed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, followed shortly by the Ford Foundation, the Lilly Endowment and the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.

This initiative on the part of academic institutions which are taking an interest in experiential learning is due partly to a grow-

ing interest in nontraditional education. This particular kind of education gets its definition from The Commission on Nontraditional Study (1973, p. xv) "as an education which allows a diversity of learning opportunities offered to an individual more than the uniform practices, wich tend to diminish the importance of time, space and academic prerequisites to the benefit of competence and performance."

The recognition of experiential learning for women in particular

Since 1970, adults have been able to plan new career objectives and obtain recognition of the experiential learning related to these objectives.

Nevertheless, until recently a part of the adult population, i.e. women whose prime activiy was to look after the family, and to do volunteer work and community service, were still kept aside. This type of nonpaid work which classified women in the nonactive population preoccupied a number of researchers. Ruth B. Ekstrom from Educational Testing, Princeton, New Jersey is one of those researchers. She has made a large contribution to the development of evaluation methods used to assess women's experiential learning. For homemaking and volunteer work, in 1984, nearly forty publications, research reports and articles are found on ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career and Vocational Education. Some of these projects such as Project HAVE Skills, ACCESS and SECOND START are now institutionalized.

In the United States, women are now the fastest-growing segment of the student population (Ekstrom, 1981) and many of these women wish to get jobs. Cross (1981) mentions that the first priority of women who have to make the transition from home to labor market is to learn what they need in order to begin a career. They must realize that education plays a major role during the transition period. For these women, their type of learning has never been tabulated in the past. Strong input on their part and on the part of academic institutions and employers has made possible the development of evaluation charts and other means of "transferring skills" from their nonpaid work in order that they may go to school or to work. This interesting cooperation between different parties indicates that mentalities have changed in the last decade (Sansregret, 1983).

The recognition of experiential learning - a reality

The recognition of experiential learning or prior learning is now a "fait accompli" in United States. The rigorous scientific methods now in use are an answer to a need for social justice and equity. As a matter of fact, official recognition of what an adult knows and is able to do avoids duplication of learning and allows the student to proceed more quickly through his or her educational program, and then to acquire better control over his or her own life.

In the beginning, a person's learning was evaluated only through standardized tests; now, credit recommendations from non academic

(accredited) institutions which teach adults can be accepted. It is now recognized that several places and situations may create learning opportunities.

Elias and Merriam (1980) mention that "one of the main contributions that progressive education has made is the broadening of the concept of education." These authors also say that education is no longer limited to studies, but includes all activities, evident and intentional, that society needs to transmit values, behaviour, knowledge and skills.

The United States has developed an accreditation system for organizations which teach their staff. The American Council on Education (ACE) which has, since 1948, evaluated courses given by the Armed Forces in order to give college credits to military personnel, is a nonprofit association which includes national and regional educational institutions and about 1600 postsecondary institutions. In 1974, ACE developed a program which extends their evaluation system to courses offered by civilian organizations. Teams of experts in a variety of fields have studied programs and curriculum given by volunteer associations, business and industry and other groups in order to analyze the course contents of programs.

These specialists make recommendations that help to modify, improve and restructure courses and programs of nonacademic organizations. They also review the backgrounds of teachers, and check their

competence in order to control the quality of the education which they provide. Once these organizations satisfy the quality standards corresponding to college level, they receive their accreditation, which means that adults who take courses at these organizations may receive proper college credits. ACE has also established a control system through which the institutions that receive official accreditation are visited in order to make sure that they meet the standards.

Another way of evaluating experiential learning is the individual method of evaluation which consists mainly of the development of a portfolio. This method seems to be the most comprehensive and the most flexible. It is the most comprehensive because it includes standardized tests and credit recommendations for a variety of life and work experience in a broad process that includes a variety of learning experiences, as long as they can be documented and related to educational objectives or to a job.

The portfolio method is the most useful one for assessing prior learning, i.e. learning that comes from all aspects of life. <u>However, it must be emphasized that it is not the portfolio itself that is evaluated but the learning outcomes</u>. This method is used by a large number of colleges and universities in the United States. In New York State, the Regents College degrees of the University of the State of New York (Regents External Degree Program) has evaluated and given official recognition to more than 20,000 adults since 1970. In most cases, these adults received credits for the development of a portfolio in relation to a selected program of studies.

Several researchers work full time in this field and contribute to the improvement of the assessing process. There are networks of researchers who exchange information, especially the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL).

One week seminars are now offered by CAEL at different times of the year, especially during summer. An annual general assembly enables the researchers to exchange information and discuss specific topics, and also to report on the most recent research work and practices.

Because of the possibilities offered by the recognition of adult prior learning, adult education is growing faster in the United States than elsewhere. According to Meyer (1976), colleges and universities involved in the process of recognition of prior learning are located in all geographic areas in the United States, in the public sector as well as in the private sector of postsecondary education. These institutions welcome diversified clienteles. Some of these institutions recognize prior learning in relation to a certain number of programs while others have policies and procedures for all of their programs. Colleges and universities benefit from a new clientele. The learners benefit from new learning opportunities while getting a diploma in less time and at lower cost (Keeton and Tate, 1978). Although this new approach entails some extra costs, it seems that the increase in the size of the adult enrollment is large enough to justify such an initiative.

The recognition of prior learning - meeting of universities and business

The recognition of prior learning has made possible a dialogue between the academic and business worlds. One talks now about new alliances (Gold, 1981) between these two groups in order to facilitate the transition of adults from one to the other, according to their educational needs and those of the employers. It was urgent for these two parties to contract new alliances because in the United States. Industry dedicates 30 to 50 billion dollars a year to education. This nearly equals the cost of traditional education, which is about 55 billion dollars (1981).

In the United States, the education provided by industry is called the Second System. Gold adds that "postsecondary education will have to demonstrate that the quality of institutional performance justifies financial support coming from the public, governmental and corporate sectors." Meanwhile the business world states some requirements when they send their employees back to school. For those employees with good experience, "they will insist upon faculty who know how to teach adults, since corporations themselves are more and more active in the teaching of adults." (Gold, 1981).

The recognition of experiential learning is now a continuing practice in the United States. Several countries throughout the

world are thinking of implementing this new practice in their own educational systems (Sansregret and Ekstrom, 1984).

The following chapter deals with the rationale that supports the recognition of prior learning in academic institutions.

CHAPTER IV

THE RATIONALE THAT SUPPORTS THE RECOGNITION OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

The rationale that supports the recognition of experiential learning in academic institutions is best expressed by the president of CAEL, Morris T. Keeton, in a conference given in Montreal on January 31, 1985. He talks about the four key policies defining CAEL

1° an individual deserves recognition, be that academic credit, or advanced standing, or some other appropriate form of recognition, for what that person knows and do (sic), regardless of how and where it was learned

2° an education which is all theory and no experience is incomplete and inadequate for any responsibility that requires collegiate or university-level education

3° access to education and learning should not be made unnecessarily difficult for any learner of whatever age or circumstance

4° learning is, indeed, power, and the society which fails to facilitate ongoing learning for its work force and for its citizenry, does so at its own peril

Duley and Gordon (1977) mention that few college and university graduates presently work in the field of their specialization and that a bachelor's degree is not a guarantee that a person will have the same occupation. These authors add that individuals should be prepared, through education, to face frequent challenges in their working environment and to envision new possibilites. In 1976, Taylor wrote that men and women of all ages and every social condition are rethinking their lives and that several of them foresee education as a means to renew themselves. He also said that at least 80 million Americans between the

ages of 16 and 60 are interested in continuing education and that 30 million others are engaged in different educational activities for self-improvement.

Meyer (1976) observed that individuals bring with them a variety of qualifications including practical experience in vocational, technical and professional sectors and knowledge acquired through academic learning.

Like Keeton, Duley and Gordon, Taylor and Meyer, one can imagine that individuals want to give meaning to their lives, i.e. to have the feeling that the actions in their lives and their activities could, in the future, have a value for them, for others, for the community and for the course of history. In short, individuals would like to feel that their lives are worthwhile (Duley and Gordon) and one can understand that they want their past experiences be taken into account.

Hatala (1979) states that the decision to grant credits for experiential learning comes from the opinion that a diploma means competence in a career as well as in a classroom. He also mentions that practical experience can offer the best way, if not the only way, to acquire skills, and that postsecondary education plays a necessary social function when guaranteeing professional competence.

Reviewing the comments of these authors, we can assume that if credits officially recognize academic learning they should also

recognize nonacademic learning (i.e. the kind of learning acquired due to social changes, to the need to control one's own life), because these learning experiences are as real as others, but until now never have received recognition.

According to Davis and Knapp (1978),

- College level learning should be recognized regardless of where it takes place
- Adults should not be required to take courses meant to bring about learning they have already acquired
- Nontraditional education options and programs serve the diverse needs of students

Seeman (1983) states that credit should be granted for the ability to process experience and transfer it into cognitive and affective perceptions. Stressing the difference between education and learning he observes that "there is a big difference between the student who just goes through an experience and one who can look at it, process it, analyze it, put it into language and thereby 'own it'".

It has been mentioned earlier that 80% of adults in the United Sates are engaged in self-directed or nontraditional learning of some kind which, according to Hatala, (1979) would oblige universities and colleges to review their policies on learning acquired outside their institutions and thus answer a growing need for competence on the part of the labor market. Avakian (1979) points out that the educative process, traditionally speaking, does not answer the needs of the homemaker nor of the owner of a small business who wishes to go back to school on a part-

time basis to obtain recognition of his or her prior learning. Green and Sullivan (1975) mention that " requirements that result in duplication of learning are unwise use of both human and educational resources."

The adult population has expressed a deep need to see experiential learning recognized. Academic institutions and governments have expressed a desire to answer this request. In adult education, it is noticeable that a lot of people look for further training. Examples include women and workers from a variety of cultural backgrounds who could never envision going back to school. A program that recognizes prior learning allows an adult to conclude an entente with an academic institution in order to take from an assessment of his or her past experience the courses that he or she needs to get a diploma.

One possible rationale for the recognition of prior learning is that on the one hand, adults have life experience and on the other hand, the recognition of experiential learning will continue to progress. Adult education is here to stay, no matter what financing is available. Cross (1981) says :" The learning society is growing because it must."

When thinking about Marc Garneau, one can imagine that a good number of adults would like to live and work differently, and that a change in their careers could be interesting.

The objective of the following chapter is to facilitate the understanding of the vocabulary which is used for the recognition of experiential learning. A few definitions and propositions are presented.

CHAPTER V

DEFINITIONS AND PROPOSITIONS

After consulting several reports describing research work and experimentation, one observes that these authors have borrowed the definition of experiential learning expressed by Keeton and Tate (1978)

> Experiential learning refers to learning in which the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It is contrasted with learning in which the learner only reads about, hears about, talks about, or writes about these realities but never comes in contact with them as part of the learning process.

There are two kinds of experiential learning. Most of the authors agree with the definition written by Ruth B. Ekstrom (1983)

- Sponsored experiential learning such as field work and internships, which takes place away from the classroom but is planned and/or supervised by a faculty member; and,
- Prior experiential learning which includes both intentional learning, such as self-directed study or non-credit courses and incidental learning, from paid or unpaid work as well as other life experiences.

When we talk about recognition of experiential learning here, we refer to the recognition of the second type of experiential learning, i.e. of the prior learning or the learning acquired outside the classroom and without the supervision of a faculty member. But first of all, let us define what we mean by a program for the recognition of experiential learning:

In an academic institution, we call a program for the recognition of experiential learning, a structure for adults which has its own administration and whose objective is to assess the learning acquired outside a traditional academic institution, in order to admit a student into an existing program.

In a program for the recognition of experiential learning, an institution requires the services of people such as

administrators
andragogical counselors
assessors, and
students

to evaluate the competence of adult students and place these students in courses which teach the appropriate level of knowledge.

Given that many different institutions are interested in the recognition of prior learning and that it is a priority among people involved in adult education, it becomes important to understand and use a common vocabulary. To provide an answer to the numerous questions asked about this topic, we present here some propositions that Gabrielle Cantin, professor of Andragogy at the University of Montreal has presented at the first Colloquium on Prior Learning, which was held at the University of Sherbrooke in cooperation with the Quebec Ministry of Education, in May 1984, as Propositions Generally Accepted.

PROPOSITIONS GENERALLY ACCEPTED *

- Recognition of experiential learning means recognition of learning.
- Recognition of experiential learning means recognition of learning acquired through experience, but not the experience by itself.
- The recognition of experiential learning is not an end. It is always done in relation to an objective, which is either to study or to get a job or a promotion.
- What is evaluated is the result and never the time spent to get the result.
- The recognition of experiential learning must respect the autonomy of institutions and the quality of their work and the dignity of the person who requests the evaluation.
- When institutions define the content of their courses, programs or jobs, this helps the person to demonstrate what he or she has learned.
- The recognition of experiential learning must bear in mind a sense of probity, both for those who are in the system and those who want to join the system.
- The recognition of experiential learning is a system for all: in this sense, it must be done in a way which facilitates the transition of students from diverse institutions or employment of the same kind and to allow for transfer of credits.

Now that these propositions have been established we may consider the principal means by which experiential learning is recognized.

* Cantin, G. Presented at the First Colloquium on Recognition of Prior Learning, University of Sherbrooke, 1984.

CHAPTER VI

WAYS OF RECOGNIZING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The principal means of recognizing experiential learning in the United States are the following:

- tests, including standardized tests (such as College Level Examinations Program, ETS, Princeton, N.J.) and faculty-made tests;

- credit recommendations for courses offered by business, industry, volunteer associations, and community services; (there is, in the United States, a non profit recommendation system which has existed since 1945, the American Council on Education; teams of specialists verify the content of non credit courses and the competence of teachers in order to make sure that the quality of teaching is equal to academic standards at the same level.

- individualized evaluation: the most popular means of doing this is to demonstrate one's skills by developing a portfolio. Other techniques may also be used. These include interviews and demonstrations which give the adult student an opportunity to demonstrate what he knows.

When we talk about the implementation of a system for the recognition of experiential learning in Quebec, we can, at the beginning, use only two ways of assessing experiential learning: tests, and the individual method of assessment called portfolio. Before we can apply the technique of credit recommendation to the teachings of volunteer services

and businesses, we must allow the academic institutions sufficient time to implement sound programs. From that point, we may anticipate that these institutions could play a role in this recommendation for credit.

Because it is the most flexible way, the one that includes the greatest amount of learning acquired nontraditionally, the portfolio is explained in separate books entitled The Portfolio - Student's Guide and The Portfolio - Andragogical Counselor's Guide.

The development of a portfolio is a difficult and detailed process by which an adult demonstrates, with proper documentation and in relation with educational or occupational objectives, non supervised learning. The development of a portfolio may also include credit courses taken previously that have not been tabulated toward a diploma.

There are two main phases in the development of a portfolio. The first phase is comprehensive preparation by the student. This is done by using a guide prepared for specific courses and programs. The work is supervised by an andragogical counselor who assists the student from the time of his request for recognition until the presentation of his portfolio to evaluators.

The second phase is the organization of the portfolio for presentation to evaluators.

COMPOSITION OF A PORTFOLIO

1. A covering page with information regarding the student's identity

2. A brief narration of the student's life experience which will give the jury an idea of who they are (see Life Experience, Exercise 1)

3. An explanation of the student's career objectives and educational objectives (see exercise II)

4. A chronological list showing the nature and the depth of the student's learning according to every course for which he asks recognition (see exercises 3 to 8)

5. A projection of educational program

6. An official request form to obtain credit (form usually supplied by the institution)

7. Documentation attesting to your learning

N.B. A table of contents may also be useful in the arrangement of the student's portfolio.

CLEO (Compact for Lifelong Educational Opportunities), a consortium of thirty colleges from Delaware Valley in Maryland defines the portfolio thus:

> The portfolio is a file or folder of information compiled by the student which articulates and defines the kinds of learning for which he or she is requesting credit, equates that learning to actual college courses, documents it and requests specific amount of credit. This portfolio is read by the faculty who will evaluate the student's learning and is used as the basis for the actual assessment.

The recognition of prior learning is, according to CAEL language (Keeton, 1985), a "comprehensive individualized assessment of extrainstitutional learning". Keeton explains that it is comprehensive because standardized tests measure only a part of what a student knows, leaving aside the learning that is not covered by the examination. The process is also individualized because not two adults can claim to know and be able to do the same things.

The judgment of an expert is also the corner stone of the system in recognition of prior learning (Sirois, 1984) and one must remember that faculty who will be assessor will have to get adequate preparation to fulfill the job of assessment and make proper recommendations.

Isabelle adds that "the recognition of experiential learning helps faculty and people from varied educational levels to define their objectives and help teachers become more motivated." Warren and Breen (1981) mention that it is also a highly educational process that makes students feel important and motivated. For example, although the recognition of experiential learning as such is a learning process, the development of a program facilitates the integration of adults into the educational program system, and helps them acquire a better understanding of who they are and the desire to achieve better.

"The fact that seventy-five percent of the students who develop a portfolio eventually complete a diploma program substantiates that statement" (Isabelle, 1984).

CHAPTER VII

QUALITY CONTROL

Various publications insist on the control of quality and on firm assurances which guarantee competence as being essential criteria for the conduct of a program for the recognition of prior learning.

According to Klemp (p. 41, 1979), the competence of a person is judged from his or her performance. "It does not matter whether the individual is a lawyer, steelmaker, or philosopher; a competent person is one who can meet or surpass performance standards either implicit or explicit." In order to recognize prior learning or implement a program for recognizing competence, it is necessary to exercise rigorous control over the quality of the programs which are to be created.

Administrators, with the assistance of a committee, have the task of implementing such a program. Part of their task is to create a program whose quality will be at least equal to the quality of other existing programs within their institutions. Keeton (1980, p.2) recalls that: "Students and taxpayers expect colleges and universities to provide meaningful credentials - to be, in a word, reliable credentialing authorities - and are increasingly critical when graduates

cannot read, write, and think effectively. Most students would prefer that the credential they receive be held in high regard by employers, graduate schools and others who depend upon it for information."

Keeton, when insisting on the need for quality control, adds that "If colleges and universities are to meet this demand, they must take steps to assure that the intended outcomes of their credit-bearing courses and of their degrees are well-defined and that each graduate achieves them."

Sachs (1980) warns institutions against the temptation of "giving away credits" and deplores "the lack of standards" with the easy assurance that comes from superficial knowledge." She suggests to administrators four key concerns to quality control:

KEY CONCERNS TO ENSURE QUALITY CONTROL *

1. That the learning be at college level (see criterion for college level learning).
2. That it fall within the kind of creditable work congruent with the mission and goals of the collegiate institution.
3. That the awards result from technically sound assessment, heeding concerns of both validity and reliability.
4. That institutional integrity be maintained in the advertising of the learning and crediting options, in the reporting and labeling of the assessment findings and in the fiscal procedures developed to support the assessment service.

---

* From Sachs, Martha Pomeranz, N.D., Vol. 9, p.54

Following a review of seventeen (17) portfolios from colleges and universities, Rydell1 and Irwin (1982) established the following criteria:

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING NONCOLLEGE LEARNING *

1. The learning must be measurable. Faculty members focus on knowledge and ability; they have no equitable way to measure the value of experience itself.

2. The learning must have both a theoretical and an applied component. Many adults are strong in applied knowledge, but may lack a firm theoretical base.

3. The learning must be college level. Typically, a person may receive credit only for things that are of comparable level to what colleges and universities teach in their classrooms.

4. The learning must be applicable outside the specific context in which it was learned and must serve as a base for further learning. The person must be able to apply the knowledge and skills in more than one setting.

5. The learning must be relatively current. A person may not expect to receive academic credit for knowledge and skills that were acquired some time ago and have been forgotten.

6. The learning must show some relationship to the person's degree goal.

---

* Rydell and Irwin, Creditable Portfolios: Dimensions in Diversity. CAEL, 1982.

Because the control of quality is an essential condition in a program for the recognition of prior learning, Sachs suggests that objectives, responsibility and control over the process be clearly and adequately specified. She adds that, ideally, the dean or the academic dean should be directly responsible for the development of a rationale and of policies for such a program, and for the creation of a committee that will define the procedures which apply the policies to be followed. Nevertheless, the responsibility for implementing these policies could be delegated to other institutonal administrative bodies.

Faculty must have their say in the definition of learning objectives and "reliable assessment would involve consistency of judgments among different faculty members regarding the credit value or levels of competence demonstrated on the basis of a given presentation of student learning." (Sachs, 1980) The author also states that each department chairman must take the initiative to work with faculty, to clarify learning objectives and program content in order to obtain consensus on methodology and to determine whether objectives have been reached. Program directors should come to an agreement about the abilities required for the granting of a certain number of credits.

Identification and definition of basic criteria are a must for the control of quality. Fremer (1976) identifies eight (8) standards required for the establishment of those criteria.

CRITERION STANDARDS *

1. Ethics/Responsibility. Criterion standards should be developed by a process that gives major attention to the needs of students but which recognizes an institution's responsibility to societal needs.

2. Management standards. Criterion standards should be developed using good management standards or procedures.

3. Definitions of adequate larning. Criterion standards should be accompanied by clear definitions of what constitutes adequate learning.

4. Comparability/Realism. Criterion standards should be developed so that there is comparability of requirements for experiential learning and traditional classroom learning. Standards must be set at high but realistic levels.

5. Adequacy of preparation and feedback. Criterion standards should be administered with an adequate student advisory and guidance system so that high standards are not accompanied by high failure rates.

6. Consistency/Reliability. Criterion standards should be applied consistently within programs, across programs, and over time.

7. Acceptability/Transferability. Criterion standards should be backed fully by the home institution to increase the likelihood that the resulting credit will be acceptable to other institutions.

8. Student Satisfaction. Criterion standards should be administered so that the students involved feel they have been well served.

---

* Fremer, John, Setting and Evaluating Criterion Standards, in Implementing a Program for Assessment of Prior Learning. CAEL, Project Report, 1976

In a research mission to the United States, Sirois (1984) reports that the credibility of the system implemented in a certain number of institutions visited is guaranteed by

- the strong governmental desire to facilitate entry of people at postsecondary level
- the quality of evaluation tools
- the number and the competence of human resources
- the systematic expertise of academic institutions in the making and use of tools and in the process of awarding credit

Chapter VIII will give an overview of the main parties that are involved in the program for the recognition of prior learning.

CHAPTER VIII

MAIN PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM FOR THE RECOGNITION OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The recognition of prior learning is a process that calls for people qualified in adult education and evaluation and takes into account the needs of the clientele.

The director of a program for the recognition of prior learning is a person who establishes links between the central administration and the different parties involved in the program. This person has administrative qualifications as well as being an educator of adults. She has official knowledge (master or doctorate level) in adult education and has practical experience in adult education within an academic institution.

Once an individual has obtained the support of his or her peers in the program for the recognition of experiential learning, that person may be appointed by the central administration to the position of program director.

The andragogical counselor (often called mentor, advisor, counselor or student advocate), plays a role which is defined by Bernard (1978) as: reference person or expert who can and must fulfill various roles such as consultant, teacher, facilitator, agent of change, and liaison." Isabelle (1984) quotes Meyer who says that a mentor must master the elements of psycho-pedagogy specific to adults (andragogy) and help them maximize the benefits of their experience.

Andragogical counselors may be faculty or professionals in adult education (masters or doctorate degree).

Evaluators are faculty members who are recognized as specialists in the field of learning which is to be evaluated. They must be sensitized to adult needs. Their "judgment will be necessary to evaluate the amount of what has been learned." On the subject of the assessment of learning, Reilly (1977) states that it invariably requires human judgement. He adds that "in many instances, particularly when prior, nonsponsored learning is being assessed [...], assessors in addition to being 'experts' in a particular substantive domain [shall] also be competent judges." (Reilly, p.1)

MacTaggart and Knapp (1981) state that the literature on the evaluation of experiential learning recommends that more than one assessor and more than one method be used to evaluate in order to guarantee the probity and the validity of results.

Assessors are faculty who are experts in the field of learning which is being evaluated, or if the nature of the work requires it, they may be "outside experts" who are invited by the internal evaluators or by the program director to participate in the work of evaluation.

If necessary, faculty who are responsible for the evaluation will call on outside experts; these may be representatives from business and industry, volunteer associations and community services,

feminist groups, or any person whose expertise could help to create a more equitable and realistic evaluation of experiential learning.

Because of their life experience (diverse and multiple activities from paid work and volunteer work, community services and homemaking) adult students should be able to make recommendations to the committee which is implementing such a program.

Their participation is important. They must have a representative who knows the educational system, who is responsible and who is competent to do so.

The activities of these main parties are coordinated by a director who is clearly identified and highly qualified (Isabelle, 1984). The author adds that "this person fulfills a certain number of tasks and supervises the people who achieve those tasks". Since the role of evaluators is very important, they should be provided with written guidelines. Another set of guidelines should be written for the andragogical counselors.

Nevertheless, it may be useful to give a brief overview of this role as suggested by Willingham (1977)*:

ASSESSORS VS. RESOURCE PERSON	Assessors who make regular evaluations of student learning are to be distinguished from other resource persons who may provide information or be consulted regarding assessment, e.g., subject matter experts or prior work supervisors.

* Willingham, W.W., Principles of Good Practice in Assessing Experiential Learning, CAEL, 1977

Any responsible person may possibly qualify as an expert or assessment resource person if the individual brings objectivity and appropriate special knowledge to the assessment task.

CHOICE OF ASSESSORS

It is very desirable to develop a clear rationale as to what types of assessors are to be used in an experiential learning program.

Whenever necessary a team of assessors should be employed in order to obtain the knowledge and expertise that may be required to assess adequately the learning in question.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The responsibilities and qualifications of assessors, experts, and other assessment resource persons should be clearly specified.

Assessors should be competent not only in the subject matter of their assessment but also in the principles and limitations of the assessment technique employed.

Assessors and other resource persons should be unbiased and objective, with respect to both personal knowledge of the student and the learning involved.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The responsible administrator and principal assessors in the institution should make every effort to be sure that all individuals who are charged with responsibilities connected with assessment have received training appropriate to those responsibilities.

Important training objectives include understanding the effective use of experiential learning, how to select and adapt assessment methods, how to better define learning objectives and write appropriate evaluations of outcomes, how to enhance accuracy of assessment, and how to interpret standards in awarding credit.

It is very important to give new assessors supervised experience in assessing learning and awarding credit in order to insure that they do not inadvertently set their own judgmental standards too lenient or conservative in relation to institutional guidelines.

LEARNER AS ASSESSOR

Whenever possible, the skill of the learner as assessor should be fostered and improved as a result of the assessment process.

CHAPTER IX

AN OPERATIONAL MODEL

The task of implementing a program for the recognition of prior learning being a difficult one, Chapter IX presents an operational model to facilitate the work of administrators and others who are involved in the implementation process. In order to give them a general idea of the different phases of this process, several American authors have been consulted. From a review of several research works and consultations with program directors, it appears that several colleges and universities in the United States used the Willingham and Geisinger (1976) model, with modifications, adaptations, omissions and additions according to the specific needs of the institutions.

Today, if one wants to move ahead in research, one must rely on authors who have good reputations and solid experience and, very humbly, attempt to adapt prior research to one's own needs.

Since we do not have any official programs for the recognition of prior learning in Quebec so far, it seems useful to present the operational model of the authors mentioned above and try to adapt this model to the needs of the population of Quebec.

The reliability and validity of this process offer a framework in which it seems possible to find many points similar to the Quebec system if we consider, for instance, the academic levels, credits and cycles.

In the beginning, Willingham and Geisinger model was introduced as follows:

WILLINGHAM AND GEISINGER'S OPERATIONAL MODEL

I.	Developing a program rationale
II.	Defining program characteristics
III.	Developing faculty resources
IV.	Defining criterion standards
V.	Admitting students
VI.	Financing the program
VII.	Preparing students for assessment
VIII.	Appraising learning outcomes
IX.	Integrating learning with future plans
X.	Coordinating off-campus learning sites
XI.	Advising students
XII.	Defining credit policies
XIII.	Recording learning outcomes

---

* From Willingham and Geisinger, Project Report: Implementing a Program for Assessment of Experiential Learning, CAEL, 1976.

After studying this operational model created by Willingham and Geisinger, we have decided to review it step by step and to explain and adapt these steps into a Quebec educational perspective.

First of all, because the recognition of experiential learning dealt with in this document is directed toward the recognition of learning that has not been supervised, Step X, in Willingham and Geisinger's operational model, i.e. the coordinating of off-campus activities (such as training sessions and internships) is therefore omitted. If we think of the Quebec education system, it can be suggested that the model be reorganized thus leading to the following model *:

SUGGESTED OPERATIONAL MODEL *

I. Developing a program rationale
II. Defining the program characteristics
III. Identifying human resources
IV. Defining criterion standards
V. Defining credit policies
VI. Financing the program
VII. Admitting students
VIII. Advising students
IX. Preparing students for assessment
X. Appraising learning outcomes
XI. Integrating learning with future plans
XII. Recording learning outcomes

---

* Adapted with permission from CAEL, Nov. 11, 1984. Drawn from Willingham and Geisinger, Project Report: Implementing Program for Assessment of Experiential Learning, CAEL, 1976.

The following table summarizes the model and indicates the key people who will have to be part of the committee. Each step will then be developped separately.

SUGGESTED OPERATIONAL MODEL FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES *

I.	Developing a program rationale	Administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students
II.	Defining the program characteristics	Administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students
III.	Identifying human resources	Administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students
IV.	Defining criterion standards	Administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students
V.	Defining credit policies	Administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students
VI.	Financing the program	Administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students
VII.	Admitting students	Administrators, andragogical counselors
VIII.	Advising students	Andragogical counselors
IX.	Preparing students for assessment	Andragogical counselors
X.	Appraising learning outcomes	Assessors and outside experts
XI.	Integrating learning with future plans	Andragogical counselors
XII.	Recording learning outcomes	Assessors, registrars

* Adapted with permission from CAEL, Nov. 11, 1984. Drawn from Willingham and Geisinger, Project Report: Implementing Program for Assessment of Experiential Learning, CAEL, 1976.

I. THE PROGRAM RATIONALE AND ITS CONTENT

(People involved: administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students)

A. Justification of educational values

1) Credits requested must be for learning that can be equated to existing courses or be equivalent to credit courses coming from another institution

2) The recognition of prior learning must be made only for non supervised learning or learning acquired through training sessions or internships, but could include supervised learning not tabulated toward a diploma, etc.

3) The development of a portfolio may include a request for assessment through testing

B. Institutional orientation

1) Recruitment in view of a new type of clientele, for example women at home, entrepreneures of small and medium size firms, trainees, inventors, adults in career orientation

2) The growth of the student clientele, for example the baby boom being over, some people want to compensate for the loss of clientele by accepting adults

3) Maximal use of institutional resources:
   - human resources: make sure that these resources - faculty, professionals and support staff - are well utilized;
   - material resources: justify the use of rooms, technical material, labs, computers etc.

4) Answering faculty needs:
   - presenting a new challenge
   - recycling teaching
   - adopting new approaches
   - revising teaching styles

5) Implementation of a new educational system:
   - recognizing that the learning places may be outside the traditional classroom
   - creating alliances with business and industry

I. THE PROGRAM RATIONALE AND ITS CONTENT (continued)

(People involved: administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students)

B. Institution-oriented justification (continued)

6) Improving, strengthening or making more relevant a particular existing program or course
- adding new courses
- reviewing course content

7) Opening doors to adult part-time clientele during the day

8) Creating opportunities to study under a learning contract

C. Student-oriented justification

1) - Improving accessibility to job market or to graduate or professional schools

- Grouping skills into official categories

- Normalizing the status of adult's students

2) - Decreasing the time required for college education, both general and professional, by avoiding duplication of learning

- Facilitating part-time studies

3) Increasing goal-oriented motivation of students and defining objectives

4) Enhancing self-directed change on the part of the student

5) Responding to special needs of special groups of students (homemakers, volunteers, self-employed workers, inventors, senior citizens, artists, ethnic minorities, handicapped, etc.)

6) Enhancing student participation in their assessment

7) Offering students opportunities to study during the day on a full-time basis

8) Offering students opportunities to design learning contracts with the institution

II. DEFINING PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

(People involved: administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students)

1) Administration of the program
   - assignment of responsibilities
   - job description

2) Coordination of the program with other institutional affairs

   Construction of an organization chart

3) Size of the program (in terms of members, of people involved: administrators, assessors, non teaching professionals, support staff)

4) Duration of the program (one 45-hour semester (3 hours/week)

5) Location of the programs: site, locals, equipment, etc.

6) General educational objectives of the program

   - educational value
   - learning outcomes
   - learning objectives
   - choice of evaluation procedures
   - demonstration of the program
   - self-knowledge
   - improved self-image

7) Intended learning outcomes of the program

   - highly motivated students
   - better prepared clientele
   - highly motivated faculty
   - program renewal

8) General character of the processes involved in preparing, educating, and assessing the students in the program

9) Staff involved in the program

   - identification of groups of people

III. DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES

(People involved: administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students)

A. Staffing

1) Additional hiring for the program

2) Release time for existing personnel

B. Faculty, Andragogical Counselors and Support Staff training in assessment techniques

1) Extent and character of training needed

2) Number of staff needed in such training

3) Faculty resistance

4) Clarification of duties of assessors, of andragogical counselors and of support staff

C. Relationship between nontraditional and traditional academic programs and faculties

1) Joint versus exclusive assignment to experimental and traditional programs

2) Job description for assessors, andragogical counselors and support staff

3) Methods for defining release time of faculty appointed to work in the service to recognize prior learning

IV. DEFINING CRITERION STANDARDS

(People involved: administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students)

A. Basis for defining academic standards

1) CEGEP - DEC 28 courses — Mandatory courses, concentration courses and complementary courses
DEC 36 courses or more

UNIVERSITY: e.g. undergraduate: 90 credits (core, optional, specialization, electives)
Admission conditions (e.g. 2 years of practice in adult education)
Pre-requisite - co-requisite

2) Student goals

Name of the program requested according to short-, medium- or long-term objectives

3) Employer's requirements in a situation where an academic institution is requested to assess the level of performance of an employee in relation with academic courses

B. Ways in which standards can be defined

1) Minimum competence versus levels of competence. Are the requirements similar to those mentioned for a student with regular status. E.g.: 60% for any type of course

CEGEP : DEC general: ± 28 courses (pre-university)
DEC professional : ± 36 courses or more

UNIVERSITY : Bachelor's degree: 90 credits
Admission requirements
Certificate: 30 credits
Minor: 30 credits; major: 60 credits, or according to institution's or department's policies

IV. DEFINING CRITERION STANDARDS (continued)

(People involved: administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students)

B. Ways in which standards can be defined (continued)

2) Checklist of skills versus overall level of functioning (e.g. minimum performance required is C)

A = very high proficiency *
B = commandable
C = satisfactory
D = developing
E = lacking

3) Expert judgment using the same evaluation standards that faculty members would use

4) Competence requirements in the fields versus competence of students in a generally comparable course

These requirements must be equal to those requested from regular students

C. People involved in setting standards

1) Faculty in the program

2) Other faculty

3) Nonteaching professional

4) Employers (when contracting with businesses)

5) Students

D. Properties of good standards

1) Fairness

2) Realism

3) Consistency

* Scale from Breen and Whitaker, Bridging the Gap, A Learner's Guide to Transferable Skills, The Learning Center, San Francisco, 1983.

V. DEFINING CREDIT POLICIES

(People involved: administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students)

1) Delineating the area of learning in which credit may be awarded

2) Setting limits on the amount and type of credit permitted, in prior learning program

3) Differentiating between records of experience and records of learning outcomes as acceptable evidence for credit

4) Establishing credit equivalencies for particular competence requirements

5) Determining procedures whereby amount of credit for unusual learning is estimated

6) Establishing review and appeal procedures

VI. FINANCING THE PROGRAM

(People involved: administrators, andragogical counselors, assessors, students)

A. Expenditures

1) New personnel:
   a) experts needed
   b) consultants - full-time or part-time
   c) consultants from other academic institutions

2) Release time for current personnel (¼, ½, ¾ or full task) in the program to recognize prior learning

3) Overhead direct and indirect costs

4) Cost of alternate procedures

5) Equating resource allocations to credit hours or other standard budget units

B. Income

1) Special student fees
   a) assessment fees
   b) fees associated with credit granted
   c) special program fees

2) Other income
   a) formula allocation (Ministry of Education), research grants, State grants. N.B.: costs could be covered by employer in the case of negotiations between business and industry to give courses after an evaluation of employee's prior learning

   b) special allocation assigned to this specific program coming from the institutions, a research foundation, or a business for publicity outcomes

VII. ADMITTING STUDENTS

(People involved: administrators, andragogical counselors)

1) Determination of appropriate qualities of prospective students in relation to program objectives and characteristics: age, ability to learn at this specific academic level

2) Dissemination of information concerning the program

3) Recruitment of appropriate students (internal publicity, businesses, industries, religious groups, etc.)

4) Admission
   a) comparison of students against appropriate qualities specified
   b) selection or advising students regarding appropriateness

5) Administration of financial aid to students

6) Orientation of the students to the program
   - seminars, workshops
   - individual counseling

VIII. ADVISING STUDENTS *

(People involved: andragogical counselors)

A. Exploration

1) Values clarification

2) Delineation of interests

3) Career exploration

B. Planning

1) Setting of individual educational goals

2) Development of a plan for meeting goals

3) Development of competitive statements

4) Review of the plan in a formative, critical and on-going manner

C. Coping

1) Relating individual goals to learning possibilities that exist in the institutions and other existing possibilities at home, in the community, on the labor market, in leisure time, etc.

2) Helping student understand the value and relevance of assessment and learning outcomes

* This step is further discussed in the Andragogical Counselor's Guide

IX. PREPARING STUDENTS FOR ASSESSMENT *

(People involved: andragogical counselors)

1) Seminars on Portfolio development

   If these sessions would amount to a total of 45 hours plus individual counseling, credit could be granted under the condition that the portfolio development meets the requirements specified at the beginning of the seminar

2) Formative advice on portfolio development and how it will be evaluated

3) Identification of prior learning

4) Articulation of learning degree plan

* This step is further explained in the Andragogical Counselor's Guide

X. APPRAISING LEARNING OUTCOMES

(People involved: assessors and outside experts

A. Defining requirements for appraisal

1) Documentation requirements

2) Types of evidence of learning required

B. Appraisal

1) Measuring nature and extent of competence

2) Determining whether competence meets requirements or corresponds adequately to learning plan

C. Evaluation

1) Determining whether credit is to be awarded

2) Determining amount of credit

D. Quality Control of Appraisal

1) Faculty agreement regarding interpretation of standards and matching learning with requirements

2) Faculty consistency (through time across departments) in appraising competence

3) Educative benefit of assessment

XI. INTEGRATING LEARNING WITH FUTURE PLANS

(People involved: andragogical counselors

1) Reporting assessment decisions to the students

2) Discussing reasons for assessment decisions

3) Reviewing original objectives with respect to the learning process and its evaluated outcomes

4) Relating assessed competencies with respect to original objectives, degree requirements and vocational interests

5) Discussing in a formative, future-oriented sense the instructional and situational conditions which best fostered learning

6) Initiating plans for future learning

XII. RECORDING LEARNING OUTCOMES

(People involved: assessors, registrars

A. Objectives

1) Translating learning outcomes into appropriate academic units

2) Providing an account of the substance or nature of learning

3) Characterizing the level or depth of learning to third parties

4) Monitoring progress toward degree

5) Serving student needs for credentials

6) Maintaining archives

7) Protecting privacy

B. Recording methods

1) Recording credits only

2) Designating credit for degrees, areas, requirements, diplomas, certificates, attestations

3) Crediting equivalent course

4) Recording credit

CONCLUSION

Administrators who wish to accept adults on the basis of the recognition of their nontraditional learning must be prepared to implement a new program within their existing academic structure. For this reason, the necessary conditions have been explained in this document. Some of the basic rules are outlined in the following paragraphs.

First of all, the recognition of prior learning calls for a change in mentality. Even though the academic milieu maintains its monopoly on assessment and accreditation, the acquisition of learning is no longer confined to the schools.

Competent people in the field of adult education and in the field of assessing learning in particular must be appointed to this program: first, the andragogical counselors, then the assessors. The latter are faculty who are recognized as experts in the field of knowledge which is being assessed.

Quality control and the respect of ethics must be part of the principles for the recognition of prior learning. Rigorous assessment methods must be in use and shall only evaluate skills acquired and in relation to courses and specific programs.

A 45-hour credit course given by the andragogical counselor should be offered to adults who wish to be evaluated for their learning. This course should be part of the program in which the adult wishes to register.

Furthermore, the people responsible at every academic level should try to coordinate their efforts in order to facilitate an adult student's passage from one institution to another. They should also envision the possibility of admitting students during the day and on a part-time basis. Administrators should coordinate the efforts of non teaching professionals, faculty, students and union representatives in the planning of a program to recognize prior learning. All parties concerned should be represented on the orientation and implementation committee. A program director should be appointed by the central administration and by committee members of the prior learning service in order to ensure the success of this new educational program.

REFERENCES

Avakian, A. Nancy; Lipsett, Laurence. Assessment of Noncollege Learning. AIR Forum 1979 Paper. Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, 19th, San Diego, Ca, May 13-17, 1979.

Beaudet, A. La reconnaissance des acquis et la condition féminine. Conférence présentée à l'Université de Montréal, section Andragogie, Montréal, 1982.

Bernard, Jean-Louis. L'Apprenant Adulte. Andragogie, Faculté des Sciences de l'Éducation, La Librairie de l'Univeristé de Montréal, 1978-1979.

Breen P., Whitaker U. Bridging the Gap, A Learner's Guide to Transferable Skills, The Learning Center, San Francisco, 1983.

Cantin G. Propositions généralement acceptées. Présentation au Premier Colloque sur la Reconnaissance des acquis de formation, Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, mai 1984.

Commission d'Étude sur la Formation des Adultes. La reconnaissnce des acquis : un point de départ et d'arrivée du décloisonnement, Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, 1982.

Cross, K. Patricia. Adult as Learners. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1981, 300p.

Davis L.L. and Knapp, J. The practice of Experiential Education, Columbia, Maryland, Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning, 1978.

Duley, J.; Gordon S. College Sponsored Experiential Learning - A CAEL Handbook, Columbia Maryland, Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning, 1977.

Ekstrom, R.B. Project HAVE Skills - A Program to Help Women Find Jobs Using Their Homemaking and Volunteer Work Skills, Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1981

Ekstrom, Ruth B. Credentialing Women's Life Experiences (Project ACCESS). Final Technical Report. Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ, 1981.

Elias, John L., Merriam Sharan. Penser l'éducation des adultes. Traduction de l'américain par Chené A. et Ollivier E., Ed. Guérin Montréal-Toronto, 1980.

Empire State College. Student Planning Guide for Degree Programs and Portfolios. State University of New York, Saratoga, N.Y., 1983.

REFERENCES (continued)

Fremer, John. Setting and Evaluating Criterion Standards in Implementing a Program for Assessment of Prior Learning. CAEL Project Report, Columbia, MD, 1976.

Fuhrmann, Mike. Steve Wozniak, père de "Apple" est redevenu ingénieur. De La Presse Canadienne, Montréal, La Presse, Jeudi, 26 avril 1984.

Gold, Gerard G. Toward Business-Higher Education Alliances. Business and Higher Education: Toward New Alliances. New Directions for Experiential Learning, Number 13, Jossey-Bass Inc., California, 1981.

Green, M.H. and Sullivan J.J. Credit for Noncollegiate Learning, Educational Record, Fall, 1975, 257-261.

Hatala, R.J. Transferring Experience Credit: Award and Transfer of Experience Credits in Undergraduate Fields, San Francisco, California, Jossey-Bass Inc., New Directions for Experiential Learning, Vol.4, 1979.

Isabelle, Robert. La reconnaissance des acquis de formation selon certains organismes américains. Rapport de mission. Fédération des CEGEPs, Montréal, Septembre, 1984

Keeton, Morris T. "Experiential learning, Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning and Quebec Colleges". Conference given at the Hyatt-Regency Hotel, Montreal, Jan.31, 1985. Études et Réflexions, Fédération des Cégeps du Québec, Vol.1 Doc.1, 25 avril 1985.

Keeton, Morris T. Defining and Assuring Quality: A Framework of Questions. Defining and Assuring Quality in Experiential Learning. New Directions for Experiential Learning, Number 9, Jossey-Bass Inc., California, 1980.

Keeton, Morris T. What Next in Assuring Quality in Experiential Education? Defining and Assuring Quality in Experiential Learning. New Directions for Experiential Learning, Number 9, Jossey-Bass Inc., California, 1980.

Keeton, Morris T.; Tate, Pamela J. What Next in Experiential Learning? Learning by Experience, What, Why, How. New Directions for Experiential Learning, Number 1, Jossey-Bass Inc., California, 1978.

Keeton, M. T. In Willingham, Warren W., Nesbitt, Hadley S. Implementing a Program for Assessing Experiential Learning. A CAEL Project Report, Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning, 1976, 78 p.

Klemp Jr, George O. Identifying, Measuring and Integrating Competence. Defining and Measuring Competence. New Directions for Experiential Learning, Number 3, Jossey-Bass Inc., California, 1979.

REFERENCES (continued)

MacTaggart, Terence; Knapp, Joan. Costing and Financing Prior Learning Programs. Financing and Implementing Prior Learning Assessment. New Directions for Experiential Learning, Number 14, Jossey-Bass Inc., California, 1981.

Making Experience Count in Vocational Education, A Guide to Help Vocational Educators Identify and Provide Recognition to Adult Women Who Have Vocationally-Relevant Life Experience Learning. Educational Testing, Service, Princeton, NJ, 1981.

Miller, Myrna R. Student Handbook on Preparing a Portfolio for the Assessment of Prior Learning. Vermont State Colleges, Vermont, 1979.

Meyer, Peter. Awarding College Credit for Non-college Learning. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, Ca, 1976.

Penland, P.R. Individual Self-Planned Learning in America. Pittsburgh: Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, 1977.

Regents External Degree Program. A Self-Assessment and Self-Planning Manual. University of the State of New York, 1983.

Règlement pédagogique cadre de l'Université de Montréal, mars 1985, adapté par la Commission des Études.

Reilly, R.R. Preface. Expert Assessment of Experiential Leraning. A CAEL Handbook, Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning, 1977.

Rydell, Susan T.; Irwin, Judith T. Creditable Portfolios: Dimensions in Diversity. CAEL, Columbia, MD, November 1982.

Sachs, Martha Pomeranz. The Tasks of Administrators in Assuring Sound Assessment Practices. Defining and Assuring Quality in Experiential Learning. New Directions for Experiential Learning, Number 9, Jossey-Bass Inc., California, 1980.

Sansregret, Marthe. La reconnaissance des acquis expérientiels des femmes aux États-Unis, publié par le CEGEP John Abbott en collaboration avec la Direction Générale de l'Éducation des Adultes, Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, Montréal, 1983.

Sansregret, Marthe. The Recognition of Women's Experiential Learning in the United States, published by John Abbott College in cooperation with La Direction Générale de l'Éducation des Adultes, Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, Montréal, 1983.

REFERENCES (continued)

Sansregret, Marthe. Adult's Prior Learning, An Overview of Various Methods of Recognition. Paper presented at the CSAE/ACEEA, Learned Societies Conference, Guelph University, June 1984.

Sansregret, Marthe. Les Acquis Expérientiels des femmes: histoire et méthodes de reconnaissance. Présentation au Congrès Canadien pour la promotion des études chez la femme. O.I.S.E., Toronto, Août, 1984.

Sansregret, M.; Ekstrom, Ruth B. Awarding College Credit for Women's Nonpaid Work. Paper presented at the Second International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, Groningen University, The Netherlands, April 16-21, 1984, 10p.

Seeman, H. A rationale and methodology for assessing and awarding credit for experiential learning or for cooperative education work experience, CVA/ACFP Journal, Vol. 19, No.3, Ottawa, Nov/nov. 1983.

Sirois, Christiane. Expériences américaines en reconnaissance des acquis de formation. Rapport de mission, Fer de Lance Inc, 1984.

Stanley, Elizabeth. Credit for Prior Experiential Learning. Information Series No. 210. ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Columbus, Ohio; Ohio State Univ., Columbus, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1980.

Taylor, Harold. Foreword, in Awarding College Credit for Non-College Learning, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, Ca, 1976.

Thomas Edison State College. Earning College Credit for What You Know: A Student Handbook in Portfolio Assessment, Trenton, NJ, 1981.

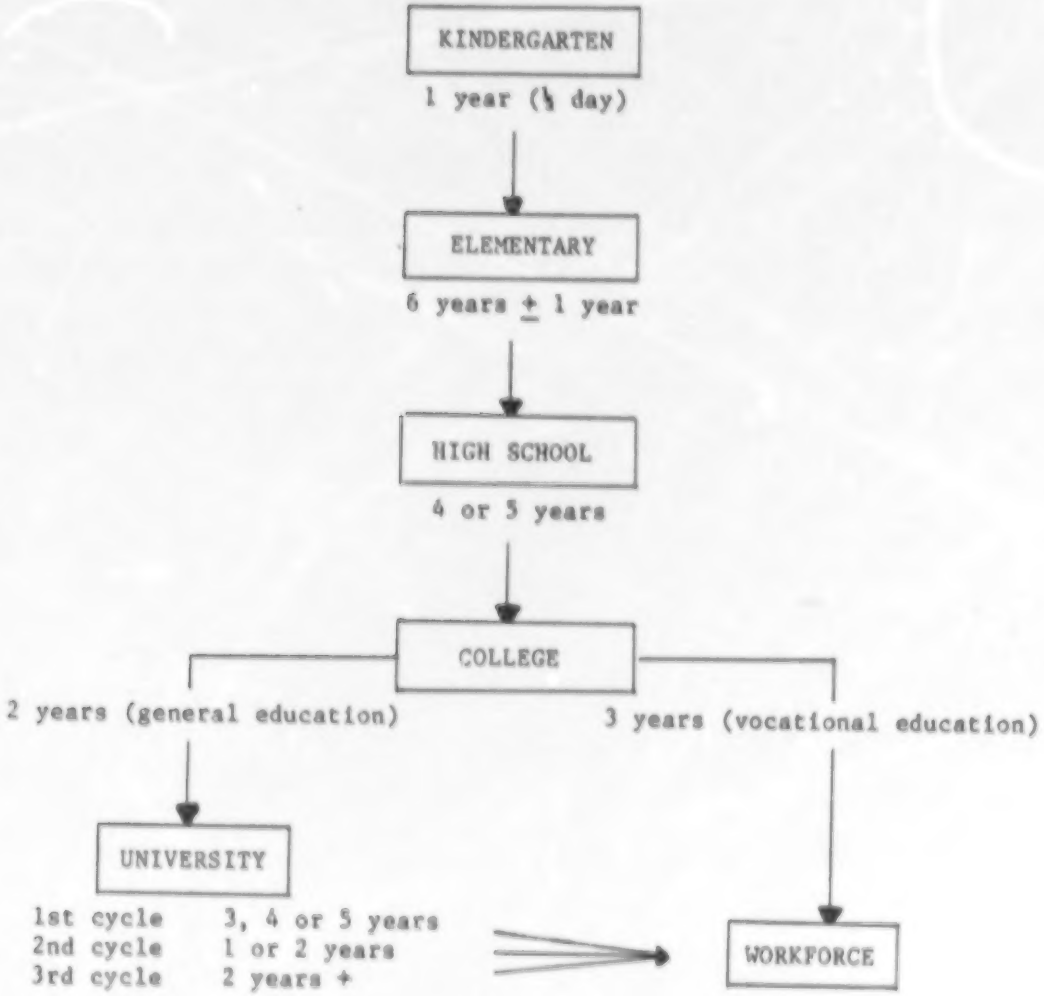
Tough, A. Major Learning Efforts: Recent Research and Future Decisions. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1977.

Willingham,, W.; Geisinger, K.F. Project Report: Implementing a Program for Assessment of Experiential Learning. Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning, Columbia, MD, 1976.

Willingham, Warren W. Principles of Good Practice in Assessing Experiential Learning. Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning Project, Princeton, NJ, 1977.

APPENDIX

General Overview of the Quebec Education System *



* Adapted from L'éducation au Québec : De la maternelle à l'université. Pamphlet published by the Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, Service général des Communications

FRONT COVER : John Starkey

LOGO : Anna R. Whitton

This document was printed by John Abbott College